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PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
BEFORE THE BOARD OF PATENT APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

Applicant(s) Rodrigues et al. Examiner: Leon, E.A.
Serial No.: 10/738,387 Group Art Unit: 2833
Confirmation No.: 7246 Docket: 577-760 RCE
Filed: December 17, 2003 Dated: October 11, 2006
For: COAXIAL CONNECTOR
 HAVING IMPROVED
 LOCKING SLEEVE

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APPEAL BRIEF PURSUANT TO 37 C.F.R. §41.37

Sir:

Appellants have appealed the final rejection of claims 1-20 dated April 21, 2006. This Brief is submitted in support of a Notice of Appeal filed August 14, 2006, in accordance with the provisions of 37 C.F.R. §41.37. As required by 37 C.F.R. §41.37(a)(2), the requisite fee of \$500.00 for submitting this Brief in support of the appeal should be charged to Deposit Account No. 20-0776. Please charge any additional fees to Deposit Account No. 20-0776.

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I. REAL PART IN INTEREST

The subject of the application is owned by Thomas & Betts International, Inc.

II. RELATED APPEALS AND INTERFERENCES

There are no known related appeals or interferences.

III. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-20 are presently pending in the application. Claims 1-20 are finally rejected and are on appeal. No claims presently stand allowed.

IV. STATUS OF AMENDMENTS

On June 12, 2006, a response to the Office Action of April 21, 2006, was filed which did not amend any of the claims, but argued for patentability. In an Advisory Action mailed, July 6, 2006, the Examiner indicated that the reply failed to place the application in condition for allowance.

V. SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION AS CLAIMED

With reference to Figures 1 and 2, the present invention is directed to a coaxial electrical connector 10 having a body 12 and a locking sleeve 14 which is attachably coupled to the body

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12. A cooperating detent structure between the locking sleeve and the connector body allows the locking sleeve to be attachably coupled to the body. The locking sleeve includes at least one radially outwardly extending protrusion 54. As seen in Figure 2, the protrusion 54 extends less than a full circumference about the outer body of the locking sleeve. The at least one protrusion 54 is received in a detent 58 within the inner wall of body 12 (Figure 3). The arrangement of the least one protrusion extending less than fully circumferentially around the locking sleeve allows the detachable/reattachable connection of the locking sleeve to the connector body (page 6, lines 7-10; page 7, lines 8-14). The locking sleeve may also include a plurality of such protrusions 54 evenly formed about the outer surface of the locking sleeve (Figure 3).

In a further embodiment of the present invention shown in Figures 6-8, the cooperative detent structure includes the connector body having a projection 74 extending inwardly therefrom and the locking sleeve having an annular groove 70 which accommodates the projection 74 securing the locking sleeve to the connector body. The locking sleeve is inserted into the connector body.

VI. GROUND OF REJECTION TO BE REVIEWED ON APPEAL

The following grounds of rejection are to be reviewed on this appeal.

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1. Claims 1-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Ming-Hwa (U.S. Patent No. 5,024,606).

VII. ARGUMENTS

A. Claim 1 is not anticipated by Ming-Hwa

Independent claim 1, presently on appeal, recites a connector for terminating a coaxial cable. The connector includes a generally cylindrical connector body having a detent disposed therein. The connector further includes a generally cylindrical locking sleeve which is coupled to the connector body. The locking sleeve includes at least one protrusion formed thereon, partially encircling less than a full circumference of the locking sleeve, which is received in the detent of the connector body.

In applying the Ming-Hwa reference, the Examiner contends that Ming-Hwa discloses a connector having a connector body 20, a detent 22 and a locking sleeve 13 wherein the locking sleeve includes at least one protrusion 16 encircling less than a full circumference of the locking sleeve. The Examiner refers to the figures of Ming-Hwa as allegedly showing such structure.

The Examiner further contends that in column 3, lines 15-16, of the Ming-Hwa reference that protrusions 16 are separated by grooves 14. The Examiner therefore concludes that the

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reference meets claim 1 in its broadest interpretation. Contrary to the Examiner's contention, there is no clear disclosure in Ming-Hwa which shows that the protrusion 16 formed on the locking sleeve encircles less than the full circumference of the locking sleeve as set forth in claim 1.

Figure 2 of Ming-Hwa shows the protrusion 16. There is nothing to suggest in the Figure 2 representation that the protrusion extends anything other than fully circumferentially around the wall formed by the locking sleeve. The Examiner cannot point to any disclosure in the specification which states that the protrusion is less than fully circumferentially surrounding the locking sleeve. While there is no disclosure for the projection 16 encircling less than a full circumference of the locking sleeve as set forth in claim 1, the specification does support a contrary position that, in fact, the protrusion 16 extends full circumferentially about the locking sleeve.

Reference is made to the abstract of the Ming-Hwa reference where the engagement between the male and female clamping tubes is described:

Annular projecting shoulder formed on an outer wall of the clamping portion of the male clamping tube engages an annular groove formed on inner wall of the female clamping tube to join the male and female clamping tubes. (Emphasis added).

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Clearly, Ming-Hwa contemplates employing an annular projecting shoulder as well as an annular groove to effect cooperative connection. Therefore, not only does Ming-Hwa fail to disclose a shoulder extending less than fully circumferentially around the sleeve, it actually discloses just the opposite, a fully annular projecting shoulder.

Claim 1 of the Ming-Hwa reference which is part of the disclosure thereof also clearly sets forth that the shoulder is annular where it states that the male clamping tube includes "an annular projecting shoulder inwardly and rearwardly inclined." Therefore, Ming-Hwa cannot disclose one structure while claiming a completely contrary structure. The Examiner's interpretation of the disclosure of Ming-Hwa would result in claim 1 being fatally unsupported by its specification.

It is well settled that for a reference to be anticipatory the identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as contained in the claim at issue. *Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co.*, 868 F.2d. 1226, 9 U.S.P.Q. 2d. 1913 (Fed. Cir. 1989). Ming-Hwa fails show the identical structure in claim 1. As such, as a matter of law, Ming-Hwa cannot anticipate claim 1.

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B. Independent Claim 11 is not anticipated by Ming-Hwa

Independent claim 11 is similar to claim 1 above reciting a connector for terminating a coaxial cable. The connector includes a connector body having annular detent and a locking sleeve detachably coupled to a connector body. The locking sleeve includes a plurality of protrusions spaced circumferentially and evenly thereabout where the plurality of protrusions are received in the annular detent of the connector body.

The arguments set forth above with respect to claim 1 are equally applicable here. The Ming-Hwa reference fails to show a plurality of protrusions spaced circumferentially and evenly about the locking sleeve.

First and foremost, there is no clear recitation in Ming-Hwa that there are a plurality of shoulders shown in Ming-Hwa. It therefore follows that there cannot be any disclosure of spaced circumferentially and evenly formed shoulders thereon. As noted above, the clear disclosure of Ming-Hwa is that the shoulder is annular and complete about the male clamping tube. Therefore, claim 11 recites elements clearly not disclosed in Ming-Hwa and as such Ming-Hwa cannot be anticipatory thereof.

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C. Claim 17 is not anticipated by Ming-Hwa

Independent claim 17 is directed to a connector for terminating a coaxial cable. The connector includes a connector body having a cable receiving end. A locking sleeve is insertably received in the cable receiving end of the connector body. Thus, in the present invention, it is the locking sleeve which is inserted into the connector body.

In the final rejection, the Examiner interprets the Ming-Hwa reference with respect to claim 17 as disclosing a connector body 13 (which also is referred to in the Ming-Hwa reference as male clamping tube 10) and a locking sleeve 20 (which is also referred to in the Ming-Hwa reference as female clamping tube 20). The Examiner then says that the locking sleeve 20 is insertably received in the connector body 13. Plainly, this is not the case. In Ming-Hwa the element referred to as 20 is not received in the element referred to as 13. In fact, just the opposite is true. The element referred to as 20, the female clamping tube, actually receives, in insertable fashion, the element referred to as 10/13 the male clamping tube. Thus, the Examiner in applying the Ming-Hwa reference to the elements of claim 17 applies it incorrectly.

Claim 17 requires the locking sleeve, which the Examiner equates to element 20 of Ming-Hwa, to be insertably received into the connector body, which the Examiner equates to element

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10/13. However, contrary to the Examiner's assertion, Ming-Hwa does not disclose this arrangement. Ming-Hwa discloses element 10/13 being insertable into element 20.


Accordingly, Ming-Hwa does not disclose the precise arrangement of components as set forth in claim 17. Therefore, Ming-Hwa cannot be anticipatory thereof.

D. Conclusion

It is therefore respectfully submitted that Ming-Hwa is not an anticipatory reference with respect to claims 1, 11 and 17 of the subject application. Accordingly, the independent claims, as well as the claims depending therefrom, are patentable in view of Ming-Hwa.

For the reasons set forth above, it is respectfully submitted that reversal of the Examiner's final rejection of the present claims is warranted.

Respectfully submitted,



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VIII. Claims Appendix

1. A connector for terminating a coaxial cable comprising:

a generally cylindrical connector body having a detent disposed therein; and

a generally cylindrical locking sleeve coupled to the connector body and having at least one protrusion formed thereon partially encircling less than the full circumference of the locking sleeve and for being received in the detent when the coaxial cable is terminated in the connector.
2. The connector of claim 1 wherein the locking sleeve is detachably coupled to the connector body.
3. The connector of claim 2 wherein the locking sleeve is movable from a first position loosely retaining said cable in the connector body to a second position locking said cable to the connector body.
4. The connector of claim 1 wherein the detent is annular.
5. The connector of claim 4 wherein the locking sleeve includes a plurality of protrusions formed thereon and being evenly spaced about the locking sleeve.

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6. The connector of claim 1 wherein the at least one protrusion includes a chamfered front wall for easing insertion into the detent.
7. The connector of claim 6 wherein the detent includes a rearwardly facing chamfered wall that is complementary to the chamfered front wall of the at least one protrusion.
8. The connector of claim 7 wherein the at least one protrusion is of greater malleable composition than the connector body.
9. The connector of claim 1 wherein the at least one protrusion includes a perpendicular rear wall.
10. The connector of claim 9 wherein the detent includes a forwardly facing perpendicular wall for abutting the perpendicular rear wall of the at least one protrusion and preventing extraction of the at least one protrusion from the detent.

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11. A connector for terminating a coaxial cable comprising:

a connector body having an annular detent disposed therein; and

a locking sleeve detachably coupled to the connector body having a plurality of protrusions, spaced circumferentially and evenly formed thereon and for being received in the detent when the coaxial cable is terminated in the connector.
12. The connector of claim 11 wherein the at least one protrusion includes a chamfered front wall for easing insertion into the detent.
13. The connector of claim 12 wherein the detent includes a rearwardly facing chamfered wall that is complementary to the chamfered front wall of the at least one protrusion.
14. The connector of claim 11 wherein the at least one protrusion includes a perpendicular rear wall.
15. The connector of claim 14 wherein the detent includes a forwardly facing perpendicular wall for abutting the perpendicular rear wall of the at least one protrusion and preventing extraction of the at least one protrusion from the detent.

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16. The connector of claim 11 wherein the at least one protrusion is of greater malleable composition than the connector body.

17. A connector for terminating a coaxial cable comprising:
a connector body having a cable receiving end and a projection disposed therein;
a locking sleeve insertably received in said cable receiving end of said connector body
and having a rearward end, a smooth annular portion and at least one groove formed between the rearward end and the smooth annular portion; and
wherein the projection slides along the smooth annular portion and is subsequently received in the groove when the coaxial cable is terminated in the connector body.

18. The connector of claim 17 wherein the locking sleeve has a first position and a second position.

19. The connector of claim 18 wherein the projection slides along the smooth annular portion and is subsequently received in the groove when the locking sleeve is moved to the second position for securing the locking sleeve to the connector body.

20. The connector of claim 17 wherein the projection is an O-ring.

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IX. Evidence Appendix

No evidence was submitted.

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X. Related Proceeding Appendix

Appellants are not aware of any related proceedings.